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Contested Terrain and Terrain that Contests: Donald Trump, Golf's Environmental Politics, and a Challenge to Anthropocentrism in Physical Cultural Studies

What is a sand dune? The question has more relevance to the study of sport and other dimensions of physical culture than might first seem apparent. Perhaps above all else a sand dune is *dynamic*. Said American botanist Henry Chandler Cowles in his 1899 text 'Ecological Relations of the Vegetation on the Sand Dunes of Lake Michigan', "The dune complex ... is not only a maze, but also a restless maze" (cited in Cowles, 1991 [1899]: 196). Indeed, sand itself is defined in part by its mobility. Writes geologist Michael Welland (2009):

The Earth's business is change, ceaseless movement and recycling, a kinetic system where everything is in constant motion ... Sand is a principal actor and never-ending performance, by virtue of its size born to be transported by gravity, rivers, waves, ocean currents, and winds, shape-shifting into ever-changing landscapes (p. 77).

Sand is deposited on shorelines through the movement of waves. It is dried by the sun and then transported by wind through one of three processes: suspension, whereby particles are scattered as dust; saltation, the main process by which sand moves, whereby it is ejected through the wind stream; and surface creep, where sand moves along the ground (see Maun, 2009: 6-10). What is compelling about sand dunes is not just their mobility, however. While generally hostile environments, sand dunes can still play host to plant and animal life such as sand lizards, otherwise scarce invertebrates, and salt-resistant grasses (The Wildlife Trusts, n.d.).

What is a sand dune? In all: a living thing. What happens when a sand dune is made a site for sport? This is the question explored herein.

This article is focused on the case of Trump International Golf Links, Scotland (henceforth, TIGLS), a golf course in Aberdeenshire on the Scottish coastline that opened

for play in 2012 after a lengthy application and construction period. As the course name intimates, the key figure behind TIGLS was and is Donald Trump, the American businessman, reality TV star, and US Republican presidential candidate known in part for his unapologetically controversial public statements on a range of topics. For Trump, Scotland was the ideal place to expand his portfolio of championship golf courses beyond the United States. More to the point, and as said on the TIGLS website, Trump was overwhelmed by Aberdeenshire's rugged coastal sand dunes: "I have never seen such an unspoiled and dramatic sea side landscape and the location makes it perfect for our development" (Trump International Golf Club Scotland Limited, n.d.). As described below, others would ultimately contend that Trump was indeed spoiling this 'unspoiled landscape', threatening the country's inimitable sand dune ecosystem in particular. The TIGLS development process was not just lengthy, but deeply contentious too.

We come to this examination of Trump's proposed golf course – and the sand dunes the course development would impact – with the aim of contributing to the literature in two ways. In the first instance, our interest in examining TIGLS is substantive and case-specific. Acknowledging that the TIGLS 'origin story' has earned significant media attention to date (e.g., see Baxter, 2012), we feel there are still important academic contributions to be made to the literature on sport/physical culture, (environmental) policy, and social movements based on this particular case. To do this, we draw from a wider project on golf's relationship with the environment – one that included a visit to the TIGLS site during course construction and interviews with five key figures affiliated with a resistance campaign called Tripping Up Trump, or TUT (see Millington & Wilson, 2013, 2014, In Press). Interviewees for the project included the founder of the TUT campaign, Martin

Glegg, and TUT's highest profile member, Michael Forbes, who famously clashed with Trump because Forbes' land and home sat (and still sit) on the TIGLS development site. Our interviews with TUT campaign members were what Weiss (2008) describes as 'expert interviews' in the sense that respondents had intimate knowledge of the TUT-TIGLS conflict and could speak in particular to the strategies and tactics used by TUT movement members.

Our research also included analyses of a range of documents using what Altheide et al. (2008) term 'qualitative document analysis' (QDA), which is to say, "an integrated, method, procedure, and technique for locating, identifying, retrieving, and analyzing documents for their relevance, significance, and meaning" (2008: 128; also see Millington & Wilson, 2013). In this case, our QDA involved collecting and assessing a range of mass and alternative media articles, press releases, and policy documents pertaining to the TIGLS case, the most notable of these being the government report that allowed Trump's course to progress from planning to construction. All told, our aim in this first part of the manuscript is to develop a 'crystallized' (Richardson, 2000) or multi-perspectival account of the TIGLS 'story', one that is sensitive to how those supporting *and* opposing this development project rationalized and acted upon their respective positions. Our most noteworthy conclusion in assessing this case is that both the 'for' and 'against' sides in the TIGLS confrontation were successful to the extent that their positions aligned with human (as opposed to environmental/non-human) interests. Those supporting the TIGLS course pointed to its surefire economic benefits as a key reason to go ahead with construction; those opposing the course helped save (human) homeowners but not (non-human) sand dunes from what they saw as the undue impacts of golf course development.

Our second interest in this manuscript builds from this last point, though in this case it considers the privileging of human interests as it pertains to *literature* on sport/physical culture. We focus in particular at this time on the recently-emergent Physical Cultural Studies (PCS) literature, given that we ourselves have been influenced by the exhortations of PCS scholars towards radically contextualized analyses of the active or sporting body. The TIGLS case, we argue, provides grounds for reconsidering ‘the physical’ in Physical Cultural Studies, specifically with an eye towards expanding what ‘counts’ as physical in work adopting a PCS sensibility. To be precise, at this point in our analysis we advocate for *de-centring, though not de-contextualizing, the (human) body in PCS research*, namely by ‘flattening’ physical cultural contexts so as to consider the associations between active human bodies like golfers and developers and active non-humans like sand dunes and turfgrass.

Thus, while related to our substantive and case specific analysis of the TIGLS confrontation, our offerings in this second part of the manuscript are epistemological and ontological in scope. Our aim is to consider and promote the relevance of ‘new materialist’ thinking (e.g., Latour, 2004; Bennett, 2010; see Cool and Frost, 2010) to the study of sport and other aspects of physical culture. In this regard, we ourselves were particularly influenced by the political ecology research of Paul Robbins, who worked in this tradition when analyzing the ‘agency’ of grass in his book-long study, *Lawn People: How Grasses, Weeds, and Chemicals Make Us Who We Are* (2012). We find Robbins’ perspective especially useful because he is sensitive to the ways that environmental issues can be understood as cultural and ideological – and also to the ways that something like a lawn can be an “environmental actor that forces behaviors, adaptations, and adjustments not only on

individuals, but on whole municipal economies” (2012, p. 13). The TIGLS development site, as we will argue below, was not only *contested terrain*, meaning a source of conflict between those supporting and opposing the course, but also *terrain that contests*: an ‘environmental actor’ with agency in its own right. Our point in the second half of our analysis is that PCS, as conceived to date, overlooks the latter part of this equation and thus a fascinating and we think extremely valuable way of analyzing physical cultural contexts.

The Making of Trump International Golf Links, Scotland: Rejection and Approval

On 10 October 2008, the Scottish government’s Directorate for Planning and Environmental Appeals submitted its ‘Summary of Report of Inquiry into Called-in Application for Outline’ – in effect, a document that opened the gates for the TIGLS development project on land at Menie House, Balmedie, Aberdeenshire. The report is impressive in its detail: 295 pages long, it contains extensive responses to the TIGLS development plan from supporters and objectors alike. That the report was even written in the first place is remarkable too. The Trump proposal was only ‘called in’ (i.e., brought in for further consideration) at the federal level after being rejected roughly one year earlier at the local level by the Aberdeenshire council’s Infrastructure Services Committee.

In November 2007, it was Infrastructure Services Committee Chairman (and local councilor) Martin Ford who cast the deciding ballot in the 8-7 vote against the TIGLS plan. Though the committee did not oppose a golf course at Menie House *per se* – it was recognized that such a project could be a boon to tourism – committee members were concerned in large part that the course would stabilize the Foveran Links sand dunes, officially classified as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The SSSI classification

means that the site is legally protected through legislation from Natural England and the UK Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs. The problem with the course, put simply, was that the dunes are important both environmentally and scientifically *because they are dynamic* – it is this dynamism that is recognized and protected by the SSSI designation. To stabilize the dunes would, by Ford's (2011) assessment, "be a serious loss to science, to north-east Scotland and to future generations" (p. 45). The vote against the course (again, at the local level) thus served the cause of preservation. It also led to two unexpected and controversial plots twists: the first was that Ford was ousted by the local council from his position as Infrastructure Services Committee Chairman; the second was that the Scottish government deemed the application to be of national interest and 'called it in' for reconsideration.

What stands out in our reading of the subsequent 'called in' report are the Directorate's efforts at weighing economic, social, and environmental costs and benefits – that is, the 'triple bottom line' central to the concept of 'sustainable development'. Particularly interesting is the relatively uncontroversial nature of the golf course's environmental impacts. This was a key point on the 'against' side, of course. For example, Dr Jim Hansom, a Reader in the Department of Geographical and Earth Sciences at the University of Glasgow, provided evidence along these lines on behalf of the environmental organization Scottish Natural Heritage. For Hansom, the course would encroach on the 'jewel in the crown' of SSSIs in Scotland and the UK, "result[ing] in the destruction of the geomorphological interest and substantially impact[ing] on the dune landforms both within and outwith the SSSI in terms of stabilisation and topographic smoothing" (Directorate for Planning and Environmental Appeals, 2008: 128). Interestingly, Hansom

also noted that, in rendering these impacts, the course would fall short of the golf industry's *own* environmental best practices. As per the Scottish Golf Environment Group's 'Principles of an Ecological Approach to Golf Course Development', "A golf course should fit into its surroundings and not be imposed on them" (cited in Directorate for Planning and Environmental Appeals, 2008: 128-129).

At the same time, and while Trump himself is cited in the report as saying that TIGLS would yield environmental *benefits* in stabilizing the sand dunes (a questionable proposition at best), Trump's group is elsewhere cited as recognizing the course's environmental ramifications: "[Trump International Golf Links Scotland, Inc.] accepts that there would be a significant loss of dynamism, but the dunes would not be destroyed; neither would all the dynamic processes" (Directorate for Planning and Environmental Appeals, 2008: 83). The case for the course instead rested largely on its proposed economic and social benefits. In the Directorate's verdict these were said to include the diversification of the economy, an increase in local employment, and training opportunities to benefit local people. Meanwhile, environmental impacts could be mitigated, albeit not in the most obvious way possible, since building only outside the SSSI was non-negotiable for Trump. The main suggested route for mitigation instead involved the creation of an advisory group – the Menie (Links) Environmental Management Advisory Group (MEMAG) – "to give advice on how to minimise adverse changes and facilitate good management practice" (Directorate for Planning and Environmental Appeals, 2008: 72).

As said above, with this combined evidence in tow, the Scottish government voted to overturn the decision made initially by Aberdeenshire council's Infrastructure Services Committee. Against the accepted environmental costs of the project stood the

government's own Economic Strategy, a policy based on "creating a more successful country with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth – by building a dynamic and growing economy that will provide prosperity and opportunities for all, whilst ensuring that future generations can enjoy a better quality of life too" (Directorate for Planning and Environmental Appeals, 2008: 215). The Trump project, replete with two 18-hole courses, a 450-room hotel, 950 holiday apartments, 36 'golf villas', 500 houses for sale, and accommodation for 400 staff, was thus given approval to go ahead.

Tripping Up Trump?: Reflections on a Social Movement

The conclusion of the political process surrounding the approval of Trump's proposal did not bring to an end the politics of opposition in the TIGLS case. In 2009, a resistance campaign called 'Tripping Up Trump' (TUT) arose with the aim of halting the TIGLS development even though it had earned government approval.

TUT's concerns were effectively two-fold. On the one hand, TUT took issue with the environmental dimensions of the proposed development. Like Scottish Natural Heritage, The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds Scotland, the Scottish Wildlife Trust, and the Botanical Society of the British Isles before them, TUT saw the proposed course as one that would imperil a purportedly protected conservation site. On the other hand, TUT raised concerns over the course's social implications. The Trump project had earned government approval, yes, yet the development site was still home to local residents unwilling to sell their land. Residents worried that Trump would apply to Aberdeenshire Council for a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO), effectively forcing their removal. Skepticism existed too

over TIGLS's promised economic windfall. For example, an article entitled 'Local jobs, local joke' from the TUT-produced newspaper *Menie Voices* proclaimed 'little evidence' of local employment two and a half years after planning permission was granted (Menie Voices, 2011). Still, as TUT member Martin recounted in an interview, the environmental and human rights implications of the Trump development were what underpinned TUT's emergence (personal interview, July 2012).

If the TUT campaign was first mobilized based on perceived problems with the TIGLS project in the abstract, it was emboldened further as development on TIGLS began. As said in one review of the film *You've Been Trumped*, a film that itself took TUT's side in the TUT-TIGLS confrontation:

It's not just the sand and the birds Trump interferes with, it's the people who live [at the development site] and have always lived there – Michael, Molly, Susan, Finlay, David. They are bullied and intimidated, their water and power cut off. And their houses surrounded by huge mounds of sand – [Trump's] putting them in one of his bloody golf bunkers (Wollaston, 2012).

Above all others, it was Michael Forbes (the 'Michael' in question in the passage above) who clashed with the American businessman, and who was subject in particular to Trump's personal attacks. In Trump's eyes, Forbes' property was 'slum-like' and 'disgusting', tantamount to the living conditions of a pig (BBC, 2012).

As might be expected from the social movements literature (see Wilson, 2012), TUT's resistance to the TIGLS development was carried out to a great extent through the mobilization of available resources and through attention to political opportunities that arose over the course of the conflict. 'Resource mobilization' is a concept that refers to the resources or means (understood in a broad sense) that social movements call upon or put to use to gain traction (e.g., labour, public support, or financial resources – see McCarthy

and Zald, 2002). Perhaps the best example of this for TUT involved the creation of ‘The Bunker’ – a tactic used to guard against the threat of Compulsory Purchase Orders. The Bunker comprised a small piece of land donated by Michael Forbes to Tripping Up Trump. TUT in turn initiated a mass ownership campaign of this same land plot – the logic being that, the more owners on board, the more complex (and, ideally, less desirable) it would be to pursue the CPO through the courts. This is ‘resource mobilization’ in the sense that TUT was mobilizing those sympathetic to its cause. It is also an example of an astute response to a political opportunity – with political opportunism understood to mean strategic timing in deploying tactics or resources in support of a cause (see Amenta, 2005; Meyer, 2004) – in the sense that TUT members identified a way to exploit existing processes for responding to CPO-related claims in the courts. Said Michael Forbes: “There’s an acre of land around the back ... they called it the Bunker. It involved about six to eight people. It’s got the names on it, so they’d have a harder time to put a Compulsory Purchase on us. But it turns out, there was more and more people who wanted to get their names on that piece of land – I think there was about eight thousand then?” (personal interview, July 2012).

Media was likewise an important resource in TUT’s strategizing against Trump. The TUT website and the aforementioned Menie Voice newspaper – the latter said to be distributed to over 40,000 homes – offered the opportunity for ‘counter-framing’ in the face of messaging from Trump and those perceived to be on his side. Said TUT member Martin: “We got funding [from supporters] to put papers all over Aberdeenshire because we found that the [local newspapers] were the main problem in getting the word out. The local papers weren’t as objective, especially when it came to [the economics of the development]” (personal interview, July 2012).

There was an element of political opportunism in work of this kind as well. Martin described how The Bunker was announced in combination with a Trump press conference so as to magnify the attention it received. TUT also engaged in the political process more directly by lobbying councilors against the CPO (STV, 2009).

Ultimately, and whereas the TIGLS development project could not be stopped by convincing the Scottish government of its dire environmental impacts before construction, the TUT movement proved successful in some ways and unsuccessful in others. If success means actually ‘tripping up’ Trump, TUT’s opponent has indeed managed to stay upright. Trump’s first course in Menie is now up and running, simply circumventing Forbes’ and other homeowners’ land, though not the SSSI. Plans for the second course are now in progress. By Councilor Martin Ford’s assessment: “We have lost an important and beautiful natural area that was legally protected as a Site of Special Scientific Interest ... We have lost our irreplaceable, natural, mobile dune system – for negligible economic return (Kennedy, 2014).

By contrast, if success is gauged by TUT’s ability to defend against Compulsory Purchase Orders, thereby keeping local residents in their homes, TUT has much to celebrate: the CPO threat was never acted on. It is notable in this regard that, even with the movement’s twin focus on social and environmental issues, TUT describes itself online as “A popular movement against using compulsory purchase for private profit” (Tripping Up Trump, n.d.). TUT member Rohan recounted how the spectre of removing local people from their homes indeed catalyzed TUT’s cause in the public imagination:

I had people coming up to me after seeing [a documentary describing the CPO] saying, ‘we didn’t realize how bad it was’, and I said, ‘well I’ve been telling you for long enough,’ you know? ‘That’s terrible, that’s terrible putting people out of their homes for a golf course’, and that won people ... I think that’s when he [Trump] backed down about the

Compulsory Purchase Orders. I think he always hoped it would go away but in Scotland too, you just have to mention pushing people out of their own homes and, you know, it's kind of a really emotive stuff (personal interview, July 2012).

Said another way, the injustice of uprooting homeowners was a cause for which TUT gained traction; the injustice of uprooting or stabilizing sand dunes evidently did not have the same effect. The interesting point here is that both the 'for' and 'against' sides in the TIGLS confrontation were successful to the extent that their causes aligned with human interests, with course advocates tying their support to the promised economic merits of course construction and course opponents earning their victory in staving off human displacement.

TIGLS and the Politics of Sustainability

As said at the outset, in the first instance the Trump development presents an interesting case for those concerned with sport, environmental policy, and social movements. On the policy front, the Trump case exemplifies in empirical terms what environmental sociologist John Hannigan (2006) calls 'environmental managerialism' – the idea that, when faced with a 'dual mandate' to both promote economic growth and protect the environment, governments typically manage this situation by enacting (or, in this case, enforcing) policies that gesture towards the latter while in fact facilitating the former. The Scottish government's aforementioned Economic Strategy, while making specific reference to *sustainable* development, was still evidently flexible enough to green light a development application *where parties on all sides recognized its environmental ramifications*. The best that could be done was to institute mitigating measures – most of all, an advisory group that could 'give advice' to the TIGLS team. A similar point can be made in relation to the

environmental policies enacted by sport organizations in a time of corporate social responsibility. That the Trump project went ahead despite the golf industry's own prescribed 'best practices' – that is, that golf courses should fit into and not be imposed upon the land, a point made by Jim Hansom in the 'called in' report – is a sign of how the economic 'bottom line' can trump its environmental analogue from industry's perspective as well. This industry-friendly decision, promoted by government using the ambiguous language of sustainability – that is, language that refers back to sustainability's triple bottom line of environmental, social and economic goals – is again reminiscent of Hannigan's (2006) 'environmental managerialism' (see also Blühdorn, 2011, Luke, 2006, and Millington & Wilson, 2014 for related work on the politics of unsustainability).

On the social movements front, Tripping Up Trump can for its part be seen as an archetypal case of a new social movement (NSM) at work (see Harvey and Houle, 1994; Wilson, 2012). TUT is a movement that emerged in response to an issue that is both local and global in scope: local in that the TIGLS course was designed for and impacted on a particular landscape; global primarily in that it involved the transnational 'flow' of capital, with Trump being an American businessman. TUT is furthermore a movement whose membership is fluid and hard to define – are the thousands of Bunker landowners TUT members or merely sympathizers? – and one organized around social and environmental issues more so than economic ones. These are both features of NSMs, as described by Harvey and Houle (1994). TUT has also used new and 'old' media alike – a Twitter account and newspapers, for example – in spreading its message both locally and globally.

Moreover, and beyond demonstrating the basic traits of NSMs, we would also contend that the TUT case illustrates an important point with respect to the environmental

movement in particular. The tendency at industry and governmental levels to privilege economic growth ahead of environmental sustainability, even with policies ‘on the books’ that could be interpreted in a ‘greener’ way, is in fact a case of anthropocentrism at work: human interests prevail ahead of those of plants, animals, sand, and other non-humans. Rohan’s above comments are suggestive that the public can be similarly inclined. That is to say, the environmental movement is faced with a situation whereby their messaging ‘catches on’ to the extent that it has a human face. The concern for human displacement, at least in this case, outweighed that of ‘freezing’ the nearby sand dunes. This may well be a disheartening finding for those hoping for environmental issues to be seen as a cause for action in their own right, but it also suggestive of how environmental messaging can be made to resonate with the public: in certain contexts, environmentalism may well require a ‘human face’ to be a cause worth supporting.

De-centring the Body in PCS Research

At the same time, and as said at the outset too, we feel the implications of the TIGLS case pertain to *the study* of sport and other dimensions of physical culture, and not just our understanding of environmental policy and new social movements. At the core of the recently emergent Physical Cultural Studies (PCS) literature is the idea that the active body need be studied in itself and in relation to its wider conditions of possibility. For Giardina and Newman (2011), “any discussion concerning the imperatives of, and for, Physical Cultural Studies starts (and perhaps ends) along the articulatory axes of politics and practice; and, more specifically, the body – of the researcher and researched alike – as locus of politics and praxis” (p. 37). Andrews (2008) cites Vertinsky’s definition of physical

culture as “cultural practices in which the physical body – the way it moves, is represented, has meanings assigned to it, and is imbued with power – is central” (quoted in Smishek, 2004: 1). The subsequent task is to examine how the physical body is dialectically linked to broader social, political, economic, and technological contingencies (Andrews, 2008: 53).

We agree there is much to be gained from the ‘radical contextualism’ of Physical Cultural Studies, as adopted from the wider Cultural Studies tradition. In the first instance, this has merits in terms of assessing and conceptualizing physical cultures. One need only contrast descriptions of golf courses in the nineteenth century – “meadows of extreme muddiness,” at least inland, per the assessment of famed golf writer Bernard Darwin (1951; cited in Bale, 2003: 139) – with descriptions of today’s technologically-maintained and highly manicured courses to recognize that golf and the experiences of golfers are affected by their wider ‘conditions of possibility’. The Economic Strategy that served to rationalize the TIGLS development project likewise preceded this particular case. That governments are moved towards ‘environmental managerialism’ is part of the political context of the day. Radical contextualism is important too to PCS’ professed critical pedagogical and interventionist agendas (see Silk and Andrews, 2015). By pointing out how pressing health- and environment-related issues, like those surrounding the TIGLS development, are constructed and framed, in our own work on golf we have aimed not only to critique but to promote alternative and more socially and environmentally responsible practices. The TIGLS approach is far from the only way of ‘doing’ golf course development – indeed, even the Aberdeenshire Infrastructure Services Committee, whilst rejecting the TIGLS proposal before it was ‘called in’, did not object to course construction in principle. Making golf’s (environmental) alternatives known is helped by critical analytical work.

And yet, even with the ostensible merits of PCS and its radical contextualism in mind, questions remain: is the active body the ‘locus of politics and praxis’ in the case of Trump International Golf Links, Scotland? Is the physical body in fact ‘central’ to this story when the physical body (of golfers, at least) *is not physically present at all*? Are PCS scholars guilty of the same anthropocentrism that we ascribed above to governments, industry, and the public too (and no doubt have been guilty of ourselves in the past)?

We have previously argued that the environment requires much greater attention from those studying sport and other aspects of physical culture – recognizing the small but important body of literature on this topic to date (e.g., see Horne, 1998; Karamichas, 2013; Lenskyj, 1998; Perkins, Mincyte & Cole, 2010; Stoddart, M., 2012; Stoddart, B. 1990; Wheeler & Nauright, 2006). But perhaps this is better expressed as such: that *non-humans* require our attention to a much greater extent. In Latour’s (2005) terms, “we tend to limit the social to humans and modern societies, forgetting that the domain of the social is much more extensive than that” (p. 6). The golfer – the active body – is certainly not irrelevant to the TIGLS case. The aim of Trump’s group is to appeal to golfers seeking a world-class sporting experience. But the TIGLS case is also one of sand dunes that ‘act’ – Welland (2009) may as well be citing Goffman in describing sand as “a principal actor and never-ending performance” (p. 77). It is one of sand dunes that are spoken for in the Directorate’s ‘called in’ report. And it is a case of sand dunes that, in the eyes of TIGLS’ critics at least, are in the end made stable or ‘frozen’ in that the development project in fact went ahead. So too is this a case where the aims of an activist group and its supporters are ‘folded in’ to The Bunker – a small plot of land that then became a (non-human) bulwark against Compulsory Purchase Orders. All told, the TIGLS case is one of *networked associations* between human

and non-human ‘characters’ – indeed, many more than we have described herein. The active body is not the locus of politics; it would seem there is no single locus at all.

With the TIGLS case in mind, what we are suggesting is a ‘flattened’ understanding of physical cultures where the active body is de-centred in the analysis, even if the relevance of the active body spurs one’s interest in a particular context to begin with. To be sure, this is not the first exhortation along these lines in the PCS or Sociology of Sport literatures. Gibson (2014), for example, depicts hunting as an experience where animals facilitate movement through nature. In a similar way, Atkinson (2014) takes up Animal Standpoint Theory in seeking to understand fox hunting from the perspective of the (non-human) hunters and hunted:

What is the fox hunt to the fox, or to the [hunting] dogs like Max? How are their constitutions, emotions, instincts, and physicalities relevant in shaping the events? How do their biologies prepare them for the interaction by making them targets of human interest in the first place? (p. 426; also see Gillett & Gilbert, 2014; Stoddart, 2012; Weedon, 2015).

Robbins’ (2012) work on ‘lawn people’ is likewise an important text in this regard, albeit one not concerned with sport or physical culture. Drawing from Althusser’s (1971) classic description of how people become subjects of ideology (i.e., when they respond to being ‘hailed’ by someone or something), Robbins is astute in recognizing that when actants like an unwatered fairway, a weed, or a dynamic dune ‘demand’ a response – and a golf superintendent, an environmental activist, or Donald Trump dutifully respond – a non-human is indeed demonstrating its agency, and humans are in some ways ‘subjects’ in this relationship with non-humans. As Young (2014) avers, our sociological imaginations are bounded by how we imagine the social; these studies transcend an anthropocentric view in understanding the social in broad and non-traditional ways.

To be clear, what we are calling for here is not the abandonment of other theoretical perspectives in the quest to account for non-human agency. Robbins' (2012) work on 'lawn people' demonstrates how perspectives that emphasize the agency of non-humans can work alongside more traditional understandings of power, ideology (in his case, via Althusser), and political economy. In our case, the social movements literature and theoretical conceptions such as 'environmental managerialism' certainly proved fruitful in understanding the case of Trump International Golf Links, Scotland. The 'unity-in-difference' of Cultural Studies, and now Physical Cultural Studies, is well suited to accommodate these varying perspectives. Nor are our comments herein a call for de-contextualizing Physical Cultural Studies in the way that Latour's (2005) social 'reassembling' project might be interpreted. This is a call instead to retain the focus on contextual analyses that has proven effective in and beyond PCS to date while also broadening our awareness of the key 'actants' within the physical cultural contexts chosen for study. Indeed, this is more than a conceptual exercise. If a hallmark of PCS research is its focus on linking theory, empiricism, and interventionist work, the last of these elements surely requires a broadened view of whom (or what) interventionism might affect and what kinds of inequalities require interventionism in the first place. This would mean bringing new attention to non-human elements of the physical (environment) and perhaps inspiring empathy for 'things' – and thus a better and broader sense of interconnectedness and inclusivity. After all, it was empathy for human homeowners and a seeming *lack* of empathy for the non-human sand dunes on which TIGLS was built that served as the dividing line between success and failure for Tripping Up Trump.

So, what happens when a sand dune is made a site for sport? While our research on TIGLS was initially focused on how the Foveran Links sand dunes became contested terrain for those supporting and opposing the TIGLS course, our subsequent reflections on the agentic qualities of the TIGLS development site led us to rethink how this case could be viewed from a new materialist perspective – that is, with sensitivity to how land itself might be considered an active player alongside the likes of Martin Ford, Donald Trump, and Michael Forbes. Conceived in this way, the development site becomes both contested terrain *and terrain that contests*. For those studying physical culture in its many dimensions, we cannot help but think that such a reconsideration of relationships between non-humans and humans would be useful, and that continuing (even in a well-meaning way) down an anthropocentric pathway would belie the dynamism of physical cultural contexts.

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